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Pirates Cap Comeback With Thrilling 3-2 Win Over Lander





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WINGATE, N.C. - The third-seeded Armstrong Atlantic State volleyball squad saved six match points in capping an improbable 3-2 victory over the sixth-seeded Lander Bearcats in the first round of the 2008 NCAA Division II Volleyball Championships at Cuddy Arena in Wingate, N.C. Game scores were: 23-25, 23-25, 25-17, 28-26, 17-15.

The Pirates (26-6) won their first NCAA Championship match since 2001 in defeating the Bearcats (22-12) for the third time this season. Lander ends its season with a second consecutive heartbreaking loss after being bounced from the first round of the PBC Championships by sixth-seeded UNC Pembroke in five after leading, 2-1.

The Bearcats trailed in the first game, 19-16, but fought back to take a 24-23 lead thanks to some timely blocking - four in all in the game - then got a back row kill from Magi Nottingham on set point to take the game. AASU jumped out to a 14-11 lead in game two, but again the Bearcats rallied, scoring the final two points to win by a 25-23 score.

In the third game, the Pirates jumped out to an 8-3 lead, extended that lead to 22-14 and held on for a 25-17 win, thanks in large part to senior Rindy Vidovich's eight kills. The fourth game, however, saw the Bearcats jump out to an 18-14 lead. The Pirates went on a run behind the serve of Brendyce Budd, scoring seven straight points to take a 21-18 lead, but again the Bearcats fought back. With a third game in the match going to 23-23, the Pirates fought off two match points at 23-24 and 25-26, eventually taking game four, 28-26. This time Bevolo led the way with eight kills in the game for the Pirates.

Lander took control early in the fifth game, opening up a 7-1 lead thanks in large part to two blocks, a ball-handling error by the Pirates and a service ace. AASU chipped away at the lead and closed to within one, 9-7, but three straight kills by Lander's freshman Nottingham helped give the Bearcats a seemingly insurmountable 14-9 lead. AASU staved off five match points, finally putting the match away on a block by Michele Remlinger and Gwen Clark on Kerri Sorensen's attack.

The Pirates, playing in its first five-game match since September 27, improved to 2-2 in matches going the distance this season. Lander, playing in its eighth five-game match, dropped to 4-4.

Junior **Michele Remlinger** hit .545 in the match to lead all players, collecting 19 kills with just one error in 33 attempts. Freshman Torrie Bevolo led the Pirates with 21 kills and 26 digs in the match, while Vidovich collected 18 kills and 15 digs and Clarke finished with 14 kills. Freshman Hannah Segebart tallied a career-high 70 assists as well.

Lander was led by Sorensen, who tallied a match-high 23 kills and a .328 hitting percentage. Kay Stewart collected 22 kills and a .340 hitting percentage, while Nottingham finished the match with 14 kills. Libero Marina Camps had a match-high 33 digs and Candace LaRocca tallied 59 assists and 20 digs.

AASU advances to the NCAA Southeast region semifinals where it will face seventh-seeded Lincoln Memorial, a 3-1 winner over second-seeded Carson Newman, at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

NCAA REGIONAL NOTES FOLLOWING LANDER MATCH

- Hannah Segebart is just the third setter in AASU history to tally 70 or more assists in a match. The last Pirate to accomplish the feat was Erin Melius, on October 19, 2001, against Catawba with 70. Amanda Shelton had 76 assists against USC Upstate on September 14, 1996, which is the school single-match record, and she also had 73 assists against UNC Pembroke on September 30, 1995.
- The .279 team hitting percentage for AASU in the win over Lander was the fifth-highest hitting percentage in a single match in Pirate history for a five-game match, as well as the highest hitting percentage in a five-game match since September 21, 1994, when AASU hit .309 in a 3-2 win over SCAD (Savannah College of Art & Design)
- Junior Michele Remlinger's .545 average (19 kills-1 error/33 attempts) is tied for the second-highest hitting percentage in a match with more than 30 attempts, with Koreena Kaminski's .545 average (28-4/44) against Bentley on Sept. 26, 1992. The school record is .645, held by Sofie Hakansson (20-0/31) vs. Florida Tech on Oct. 15, 2001.
- AASU picked up its first win in NCAA regional competition since 2001, ending a streak of four straight losses in the NCAA postseason.
- The win over Lander improved AASU to 24-1 all-time against the Bearcats.
- AASU's meeting with Lincoln Memorial will be just the second in school history. The first meeting came on September 16, 2000, in a neutral-site match at North Alabama. Lincoln Memorial won, 3-1.
- With her 18 kills on Friday against Lander, Rindy Vidovich is just 20 kills shy of reaching the 1,000 kill plateau for her career - only five players in AASU history have reached that figure.
- With her 70 assists on Friday against Lander, Hannah Segebart is just 50 assists shy of reaching the 2,000 assist plateau for her career - she would be only the fourth player in AASU history to reach that figure.



ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

11935 ABERCORN STREET, SAVANNAH, GA 31419

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